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ABSTRACT

This guide provides practical information, within a theoretical context, for educators who work with adult learners in formal and informal settings ranging from college and university courses to business and industrial training programs to community and special interest groups. The first two chapters examine the theoretical framework within which adult education practice exists and the special characteristics of adult learners (with special emphasis on self-directedness). Chapter 3 examines the role of adult educators in a continuum from teacher-directed through learner-directed to mutually directed learning. The process that learners complete in becoming self-directed is outlined next, in chapter 4. Chapter 5 introduces the concept of transformative learning (detailed by Mezirow in 1990) and provides several techniques that adult educators can use to encourage critical self-reflection and constructive change in their adult students. Specific practical techniques for dealing with various problems that can arise in programs based on self-directed or transformative learning are provided in chapter 6. The final chapter provides two case studies illustrating the process of developing a theory of educational practice. Contains 104 references. (MN)

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